

New records of uncommon and poorly known species for Ugandan National Parks and Forest Reserves

J.D. Rossouw

From March to May 1998, with the joint co-operation of the Uganda Tourist Board, Uganda National Parks the Forestry Department, informal research was conducted in some of the protected areas in Uganda. The aim was to produce 'Where to watch birds in Uganda' (Rossouw & Sacchi 1998), a birder's site guide promoting avitourism in the country's national parks, major forest reserves and other birding areas. Using the national parks checklists produced by the National Biodiversity Data Bank (NBDB) (Wilson 1995) and the recent Forestry Department Biodiversity Reports (FDBR) (Howard & Davenport 1996) as references, we recorded a number of birds new to the various protected areas. Here we detail records of some rare or poorly known species encountered during our survey, supplementing the information in Britton (1980). Many new records for National Park (NP) lists were of common, widespread species previously not listed from remote and little visited sites, such as Mgahinga NP. These records are held by the NBDB but are not reported on here.

The main sites visited were: Mabira Forest Reserve (0°30' N, 33°00' E), 9–12 March and 23 May; Lake Mburo NP (0°40' S, 30°55' E), 18–19 March; Bwindi Impenetrable NP (1°00' S, 29°40' E), 20–26 March and 29 March–5 April; Mgahinga NP (1°20' S, 29°40' E), 27–28 March; Echuya Forest Reserve (1°10' S, 29°50' E), 29 March; Queen Elizabeth NP (0°10' S, 29°50' E), 5–13 April; Semliki NP (0°52' N, 30°05' E), 14–22 April and 26–31 May; Semliki Wildlife Reserve (WR) (1°00' N, 30°15' E), 22–25 April; Kibale NP (0°30' N, 30°25' E), 26–30 April; Budongo Forest Reserve (1°45' N, 31°35' E), 1–3 May and 11–13 May; Murchison Falls NP (2°20' N, 31°45' E), 4–10 May; Kidepo Valley NP (3°50' N, 33°45' E), 16–21 May; Mt Elgon NP (0°10' N, 34°30' E), 23–25 May; and Mt Moroto area (2°30' N, 34°45' E), 25–26 May.

The following observers participated in various stages of the field work: Michael Green (MG) 9 March–23 April; Jeremy Lindsell (JL) 1–21 May and 26–31 May; Adam Riley (AR) 11–31 May, Jonathan Rossouw (JR) and Sherran Rossouw (SR) 9 March–31 May, Marco Sacchi (MS) 9 March–21 May; Malcolm Wilson (MW) 5–25 April and 26–31 May, and Katie Wilson (KW) 26–31 May. Observations were made by all observers unless otherwise indicated.

Dwarf Bittern *Ixobrychus sturmii* Three adults in the Ishasha sector of Queen Elizabeth NP on 5 April and a single adult at an oxbow lake along the Narus River in Kidepo Valley NP on 17 May. The latter is the first park record of this species, considered a "widespread but uncommon visitor" by Britton (1980).

Rufous-bellied Heron *Ardeola rufiventris* An adult on the northern edge of Lake Opeta (1°39' N, 34°10' E) on 26 May (AR, JR and SR). Britton (1980) considered the species "widespread but local", with an "apparent absence" from the papyrus swamps of E Uganda.

Spot-breasted Ibis *Bostrychia rara* A single vocalising individual landed at the edge of an oxbow of the Kirumia River, Semliki NP on the evening of the 29 May and subsequently flushed, issuing further vocalisations. A second individual, possibly the same bird, called from the same area at dawn on 30 May. Its call was tape-recorded by JR. Similar vocalisations were heard and tape-recorded on the evening of 30 May (single individuals) and at dawn on 31 May (at least two birds). The specific identity of the birds could not be established at the time, but subsequent review of the literature and analysis of our tape recordings confirmed their identity as *B. rara*. The distinctive soft vocalisation with the accent on the second syllable is considered to be the best means of identifying this elusive species, a recent addition to the East African avifauna (Ash *et al.* 1991a).

African Cuckoo Hawk *Aviceda cuculoides* Singles, probably the same bird, along the 'Kirumia Trail', Semliki NP on 17 and 19 April (JR, SR and MW) were engaged in characteristic, steeply undulating display flight. Absent from the NBDB park list, though apparently previously recorded in Semliki (D. Pomeroy pers. comm.).

Eurasian Honey Buzzard *Pernis apivorus* Single dark-phase adult c. 20 km west of Kampala on 15 March (JR, SR and MS) and a single barred-phase adult at Murchison Falls on 8 and 9 May (JL, JR and SR), the latter confirming the previous records from Murchison Falls NP. "Generally uncommon and seldom recorded" in Uganda (Pearson & Turner 1986), most East African records coming from "east of the Kenya-Tanzania rift" (Britton 1980).

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* Single sub-adult near Lake Kikorongo, Queen Elizabeth NP on 9 April. "Occasional" away from drier areas in E Uganda (Britton 1980).

'Beaudouin's' Short-toed Snake Eagle *Circaetus gallicus beaudouini* An adult perched near Mweya, Queen Elizabeth NP on 9 April, subsequently seen soaring and in hovering flight (MG, JR, MS, MW), and an adult in flight near Masindi on 11 May (JL, JR, SR, MS). An individual suspected to be this species (and possibly the same Mweya bird) was seen in the area in late March by MW. This scarce species is not present on the NBDB list for Queen Elizabeth NP although Britton (1980) reports "occasional birds at Rwenzori

National Park [the name for Queen Elizabeth NP at that time]... in W Uganda".

Red-thighed Sparrowhawk *Accipiter erythropus* An adult seen on 19 April in Semliki NP, its only East African locality, was observed being mobbed by a party of small passerines (JR). Although the species is inconspicuous, it "might be reasonably common" (Britton 1980).

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis* An adult near Ishasha and an adult and an immature c. 30 km SW of Katunguru, Queen Elizabeth NP on 6 April flew steadily northwards and may have been passage migrants. Though considered scarce by Pearson & Turner (1986), with "all records from the north and north-east", the species is present on the NBDB list for Queen Elizabeth NP.

Ayres's Hawk-Eagle *Hieraaetus ayresii* One seen daily (14–16 April) near Sempaya, Semliki NP and one in Narus Valley, Kidepo Valley NP on 17 May. Considered "scarce and local" by Britton (1980).

Sooty Falcon *Falco concolor* An adult flying steadily northwards on 4 April with Common Buzzards *Buteo buteo* over Buhoma, Bwindi Impenetrable NP, presumably on passage, is a new record for the park. Considered an uncommon passage migrant by Pearson & Turner (1986), with records of small parties in Murchison Falls NP and near Masindi suggesting a migration route along the Albertine Rift.

Common Quail *Coturnix coturnix* Though greatly outnumbered by Harlequin Quail *Coturnix delegorguei*, at least four (probably more) were present in moist grassland in the Narus Valley on 17 May, constituting the first record of this species in Kidepo Valley NP. The race involved could not be determined.

Buff-spotted Flufftail *Sarothrura elegans*. The distinctive hooting vocalisation of a male of this species was heard issuing from dense *Acacia* thicket at Paraa, Murchison Falls NP from 23:10 on 6 May to c. 03:00 on 7 May (JR, SR). This is the first record of *S. elegans* in Murchison Falls NP, though the species is fairly common in the adjacent Budongo Forest Reserve (pers. obs.). Three males were heard calling from the undergrowth of montane forest in Mount Elgon NP on 24 May (AR, JR, SR); though absent from the NBDB list, the species is reported in the FDBR for the park.

Red-chested Flufftail *Sarothrura rufa* Two heard delivering the repeated *dueh* territorial call on 22 March from Mubwindi Swamp in Bwindi Impenetrable NP, a site where this species has previously been recorded (Ash *et al.* 1991b). A similar vocalisation, as well as a short bout of the hooting song of the male, was tape-recorded at the edge of a small marsh in Kibale NP on 29 April (JR, MS). This constitutes the first park record of *S. rufa*, a species known in Uganda from only three records prior to 1980 (Britton 1980).

Nkulengu Rail *Himantornis haematopus* Characteristic duets of this elusive species were heard in Semliki NP near Sempaya Hot Springs (28 May) and at two sites on the 'Kirumia Trail' (17, 18 April and 29–31 May), usually an hour after sunset. A pair that vocalised from a perch 5 m above the trail at 20:10 on 30 May, called from the same position at c. 05:00 on 31 May and were subsequently seen in flight and running along thick branches up to 15 m off the ground. Semliki NP is the only Ugandan locality for this forest rail, until 1980 known only from a single record (Britton 1980).

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana* An adult bird in moist grassland with muddy pools near Ishasha, Queen Elizabeth NP on 6 April is a new park record; a second was in similar habitat on the Semliki Flats (1°00' N, 30°30' E) on 25 April. There are three previous records from Uganda (Pearson & Turner 1986), none from within national parks.

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio* Though absent from the NBDB list for Murchison Falls NP, no fewer than eight individuals were seen on the launch cruise from Paraa to Murchison Falls on 8 May, including an adult with three downy young. Britton (1980) considered this species common in the papyrus swamps of the Lake Victoria basin but "hardly known elsewhere in Uganda". It seems inconceivable that so conspicuous a species could remain undetected in such a frequently visited site; these sightings probably reflect a recent range extension of the species down the Victoria Nile.

Rock Pratincole *Glareola nuchalis* One sub-adult perched on a road in Queen Elizabeth NP at c. 22:00 on 9 April was possibly involved in post-breeding dispersal. The species' closest breeding sites are on rocks in the Semliki and Nile Rivers and "there are no records away from these breeding sites" (Britton 1980), though the NBDB lists it for Queen Elizabeth NP.

Western Bronze-naped Pigeon *Columba iriditorques* Three crossing ridges near Ruhizha (2300 m) between 20–26 March, four near Kitahurira (1550 m) on 21 March and small numbers daily near Buhoma (1550 m), Bwindi Impenetrable NP from 31 March–4 April. Small numbers daily along 'Kirumia Trail', Semliki NP from 17–19 April; fewer present (less vocal?) from 29–31 May. The two records reported in Britton (1980) are from these two reserves. A small *Columba* in flight over the forest in Kibale NP on 30 April (JR, SR) was also thought to be this species; however, *C. delegorguei* could not be excluded.

Vinaceous Dove *Streptopelia vinacea* Large numbers daily in both Murchison Falls NP and Kidepo Valley NP, with only single Ring-necked Doves *S. capicola* recorded in each reserve (relative abundance *contra* NBDB list).

Black-collared Lovebird *Agapornis swinderniana* A pair on 2 May in Budongo FR (JL, JR, SR), where apparently rare (JL pers. comm.). Known elsewhere in Uganda from Semliki NP and an old record in Maramagambo Forest (Britton 1980).

Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo *Cercococcyx olivinus* Small numbers at medium altitudes (c. 1550 m) in Bwindi Impenetrable NP from mid-March to early April, daily in Kibale NP from 28–30 April and once in Budongo FR on 11 May. Barred Long-tailed Cuckoo *C. montanus* was very common at high altitudes in Bwindi Impenetrable NP, while Dusky Long-tailed Cuckoo *C. mechowii* was uncommon to common in Mabira FR, Bwindi Impenetrable NP, Kibale NP, Semliki NP and Budongo FR. At Buhoma in Bwindi Impenetrable NP, where *C. olivinus* and *C. mechowii* are sympatric, *olivinus* favoured more broken forest and forest edge and seemed absent from taller forest with a closed canopy. Its apparently more common congener was recorded in both forest types. Both species called mainly at dawn and dusk or after rain and were responsive to tape playback.

Black-throated Coucal *Centropus leucogaster* Two seen and at least four others heard and tape-recorded along the 'Kirumia Trail', Semliki NP from 28–31 May are the first records of this forest coucal in East Africa (Rossouw & Lindsell 2001).

Fraser's Eagle-Owl *Bubo poensis* A single bird heard calling below Ruhizha, Bwindi Impenetrable NP on 24 March (JR, SR). A rarely recorded forest owl known in Uganda from two specimens (Britton 1980) and recent sight records (A. Twinomujuni, pers. comm.) in Bwindi Impenetrable NP.

Pel's Fishing Owl *Scotopelia peli* An adult roosting in dense, waterside *Acacia* along the Victoria Nile above Paraa on 8 May and a second flushed from riverine forest below the falls, Murchison Falls NP on 9 May. Formerly known in Uganda from only a handful of records in Murchison Falls NP, this species has recently been recorded in Semliki NP (Ash *et al.* 1991b).

Red-chested Owlet *Glaucidium tephronotum* One seen and heard in Mount Elgon NP on 25 May (SR). An uncommon, localised resident (Britton 1980).

[**African Barred Owlet** *Glaucidium capense* On 23 April in Semliki WR, a Spotted Morning Thrush *Cichladusa guttata* was heard mimicking a call virtually identical to that of *G. c. ngamiense*, the sub-species with which the observers are most familiar. The only record of this owlet in Uganda is a specimen of the forest-dwelling race *G. c. castaneum*, taken in Semliki NP on 8 December 1968 (Friedmann & Williams 1971). *G. c. castaneum* is sometimes considered a distinct species, the Chestnut Owlet, and is a "rare and little known" resident of forest in the Semliki Valley (Britton 1980, Fry *et al.* 1988). Despite extensive searches at dawn, dusk and at night (23–25 April), including the use of tape playback of *G. c. ngamiense*, the owlet itself was not seen or heard.]

African White-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus natalensis* Fairly common in Kidepo Valley NP from 16–20 May, with over ten seen and heard daily in the moist Narus Valley.

Dusky Nightjar *Caprimulgus fraenatus* A single male of this species, recently recorded for the first time in Uganda (Ash 1985), was heard and seen 3 km south-east of Moroto town on 25 May.

Slender-tailed Nightjar *Caprimulgus clarus* At least six heard, seen and photographed approximately 8 km north of Apoka in Kidepo Valley NP on 19 and 20 May.

African Black Swift *Apus barbatus* A small flock in Mount Elgon NP on 24 May confirms the previous record(s) for this national park. This species is also known from the Kenyan side of Mount Elgon (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996).

Chocolate-backed Kingfisher *Halcyon badia* A pair in Maramagambo Forest, Queen Elizabeth NP on 11 March, small numbers daily on the 'Kirumia Trail', Semliki NP (17–19 April and 29–31 May) and common along the 'Royal Mile', Budongo FR on 2 and 12 May. A 'local and generally uncommon resident', known elsewhere in Uganda only from Bugoma FR (Britton 1980).

Shining-blue Kingfisher *Alcedo quadribrachys* One in Entebbe Botanical Gardens on 13 March, two in Semliki NP on 17 April and 30 May and one, probably the same individual, seen daily near Busingiro, Budongo FR (1–5 and 12–13 May). An uncommon resident of lowland forest (Britton 1980).

Black Scimitarbill *Rhinopomastus aterrimus* Two near Busingiro on 13 May.

White-crested Hornbill *Tropicranus albocristatus* One seen daily (14–17 April) in the Sempaya area, Semliki NP, was observed carrying food on numerous occasions, and at least three individuals were present along the 'Kirumia Trail' from 29–31 May. Considered "rare or extra-limital...with no recent records" by Britton (1980), though recorded by Ash *et al.* (1991b).

Moustached Green Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus leucomystax* Two birds in Mount Elgon NP on 24 May. This species has only been recorded twice previously in Uganda (van Someren 1918, Dranzoa & Rodrigues 1990) but is fairly common in forest on the Kenyan side of Mount Elgon (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996).

Yellow-spotted Barbet *Buccanodon duchaillui* Two in Mount Elgon NP on 24 May constitute the first park records, though the species is known from the Kenyan side of the mountain (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996).

Scaly-throated Honeyguide *Indicator variegatus* One heard and seen at Magombe Swamp on 27 April, though the species is unrecorded within the adjacent Kibale NP.

Dwarf Honeyguide *Indicator pumilio* Three individuals in Bwindi Impenetrable NP, 20–26 March. A "rare and little-known species", known in East Africa only from Bwindi Impenetrable NP (Britton 1980).

Zenker's Honeyguide *Melignomon zenkeri* One along the 'Kirumia Trail' in

Semliki NP on 29 May. This observation will be discussed in detail elsewhere (JL in prep.). Prior to this sight record, known in East Africa on the basis of a single specimen collected in Semliki in 1967 (Friedmann & Williams 1971).

Gabon Woodpecker *Dendropicos gabonensis* Two on 17 April and two on 30 May in Semliki NP. Previously known in Uganda from two specimens collected in Semliki in 1967 (Britton 1980).

Elliot's Woodpecker *Dendropicus elliotii* At least two pairs near Buhoma, Bwindi Impenetrable NP (30 March–5 April), always seen foraging with mixed-species flocks. A pair and a single along the 'Kirumia Trail', Semliki NP on 18 April. Described as an apparently rare resident by Britton (1980).

African Green Broadbill *Pseudocalyptomena graueri* One near Mubwindi Swamp, Bwindi Impenetrable NP on 22 March and again on the 24 March, perched in the canopy and reacting aggressively towards nearby birds, including Montane Oriole *Oriolus percivali*. A pair was seen feeding recently fledged young in the same area a few days later (JL). Bwindi Impenetrable NP is the only East African site for this "apparently rare resident" (Britton 1980).

Cliff Swallow species *Hirundo* sp. An individual of an unidentified species of cliff swallow was seen in a mixed flock of swallows and swifts in Kidepo Valley NP on 17 May (JR, JL). The bird closely resembled South African Cliff Swallow *H. spilodera* except for its uniformly blue-black upperparts and pale buff underparts with indistinct breast streaking, and may be similar to cliff swallows seen recently in Ethiopia (Madge and Redman, in Keith *et al.* 1992).

Common House Martin *Delichon urbica* Numerous small flocks moving northwards along the edge of the Albertine Rift Valley near Budongo FR on 4 May were presumably passage migrants. In Uganda, considered scarce away from the eastern highlands (Pearson & Turner 1986).

Leaflove *Pyrrhurus scandens* A group of three birds in Mabira FR on 10 March (MG) and again on the 11 March (all observers), and very common (c. 1 group per 3 ha of gallery forest) in Semliki Wildlife Reserve. Considered scarce and local in Uganda, except in the "Bwamba (Semliki) lowlands", where common (Britton 1980).

Joyful Greenbul *Chlorocichla laetissima* One in Mabira FR on 10 March confirms previous sight records from this forest. At least three (possibly the same individuals) seen daily in *Cyanometra*-dominant forest in Semliki NP (17–19 April) and fairly common in Kibale NP (27–31 April). Considered scarce and local in Uganda, except in Kibale NP, where "common" (Britton 1980).

Simple Greenbul *Chlorocichla simplex* One seen on 17 April in Semliki NP, its only known East African locality. Previously known in Uganda from four old specimens (Friedmann & Williams 1971).

Puvel's Illadopsis *Illadopsis puveli* Common (> 10 on 11 May) in the Kaniyo-Pabidi sector of Budongo FR. This species is a recent addition to the East African avifauna (Plumptre & Owiunji 1997).

Kivu Ground Thrush *Zoothera tanganjicae* At least five individuals seen, heard and tape-recorded (JR) in Bwindi Impenetrable NP (30 March–5 April). They were observed foraging silently on forest tracks at first light and vocalising for long periods from perches in the lower canopy, mainly in the mid-morning (09:00–11:00).

Uganda Woodland Warbler *Phylloscopus budongoensis* One in a mixed-species flock in Kibale NP on 29 April constitutes the first park record of this species, which is "sparsely distributed" through medium altitude forests in Uganda (Britton 1980).

Broad-tailed Warbler *Schoenicola brevirostris* Common (> 10 daily) in seasonally moist grassland in the Narus Valley, Kidepo Valley NP (16–21 May). This confirms the previous park record(s).

Papyrus Yellow Warbler *Chloropeta gracilirostris* One in papyrus at the edge of Lake Mburo, Lake Mburo NP on 19 March. A scarce and localised species of papyrus swamps (Britton 1980).

Dark-capped Yellow Warbler *Chloropeta natalensis* Two near Maramagambo Forest, Queen Elizabeth NP on 11 April (JR, MW) and one near Busingiro, Budongo FR on 13 May (JR) constitute the first records for these reserves of this "wide-ranging but generally rather uncommon bird" (Britton 1980).

Karamoja Apalis *Apalis karamojae* One in sparse Whistling Thorn *Acacia drepanolobium* in the arid Kidepo Valley, Kidepo Valley NP on 20 May (JL, AR, JR, SR) is only the sixth Ugandan record of this highly localised and globally threatened species (Collar & Stuart 1988).

Black-collared Apalis *Apalis pulchra* A recent addition to the Uganda list (Dranzoa & Rodrigues 1990), this species was common (> 10 daily) in forest at c. 2200 m in Mount Elgon NP, 24–25 May.

Grauer's Warbler *Graueria vittata* Fairly common by call (5–10 heard daily) at both upper (2200–2400 m) and medium (c. 1600 m) elevations in Bwindi Impenetrable NP, 20 March–5 April. One at c. 1650 m near Buhoma appeared to be involved in nest construction, returning repeatedly with nesting material to a globular cluster of moss and plant fibres, roughly 10 cm in diameter and positioned in an inaccessible tangle of leaves at the edge of a creeper c. 6 m above the ground (JR, SR). A little-known endemic of forests flanking the Albertine Rift Valley (Urban *et al.* 1997).

Grey Longbill *Macrosphenus concolor* One seen and tape-recorded in Mabira FR on 12 March and at least six individuals seen (and most tape-recorded) at two sites in Budongo FR (where considered fairly common by JL) from 1–4 May and 12–13 May. One seen at c. 700 m in Semliki NP on 16

April (JR) is the first reported for the park. Considered scarce, at 1000–1400 m in Uganda, though present throughout the lowland forest of the adjacent Democratic Republic of Congo (Urban *et al.* 1997). Inconspicuous and easily overlooked until its characteristic song is recognised (pers. obs.).

Lemon-bellied Crombec *Sylvietta denti* One heard, seen and tape-recorded along the 'Kirumia Trail' in Semliki NP on 19 April (JR, SR, MW) is the first park record. Infrequently seen but fairly common by call (3–5 daily) in Budongo FR, 1–4 May and 12–13 May. A recent addition to the East African avifauna, considered uncommon and local but "probably under-recorded" (Urban *et al.* 1997).

Brown Parisoma *Parisoma lugens* One in Mount Elgon NP on 24 May is the first record for the park, though the species is recorded from the Kenyan side of the mountain. An uncommon and local bird in Uganda, known elsewhere from Kadam, Morungole, Timu, Kasagala and Maruzi forests (FDBR).

Tit-Hylia *Pholidornis rushiae* One in Mabira FR on 10 March (MG) and two on 11 March (MG, JR, MS). Until 1980, known in Uganda from only two specimens collected at Mabira, though seen subsequently near Buhoma, Bwindi Impenetrable NP (AR, A. Twinomujuni pers. comm.).

White-tailed Blue Flycatcher *Elminia albicauda* Three in Mgahinga Gorilla NP on 28 March, four in Echuya FR on 29 March and fairly common at higher altitudes in Bwindi Impenetrable NP (several daily). Considered local and uncommon (Britton 1980) but apparently fairly common in SW Uganda.

White-bellied Crested Flycatcher *Trochocercus albiventris* and **Dusky Crested Flycatcher *T. nigromitratus*** These extremely similar species are apparently sympatric at c. 1550–1600 m near Buhoma, Bwindi Impenetrable NP. *T. albiventris* is by far the more numerous of the two (certainly much more frequently seen) and is the common small flycatcher accompanying under-storey flocks, both in the forest interior and along the forest tracks. Despite careful observation, typical *T. nigromitratus* was observed on only three occasions between 30 March and 5 April, all in undergrowth within the forest interior and once in the same area as that where a group of *T. albiventris* were present earlier in the day. There were, however, a number of birds that could not be identified, despite good views at close quarters, showing apparently intermediate characters between the two forms. Whether these birds were merely atypical individuals or hybrids could not be established.

Blue-mantled Crested Flycatcher *Trochocercus cyanomelas* Despite the author being familiar with its characteristic vocalisations, this species was only recorded once in Bwindi Impenetrable NP during the periods 19–27 March and 30 March–5 April, in a ridge-top thicket at c. 2100 m. A local species in Uganda, known only from Bwindi Impenetrable NP, with old records from scattered localities elsewhere in the south (Urban *et al.* 1997).

Pygmy Batis *Batis perkeo* A pair seen, heard and tape recorded in the Kidepo Valley, Kidepo Valley NP on 21 May were the only batises encountered in this arid sector of the park. This constitutes the first record of this species for the reserve, previously known in Uganda only from the extreme east near Moroto (where fairly common, pers. obs.) and north of Mt. Elgon (Urban *et al.* 1997).

Ituri Batis *Batis ituriensis* On 3 May, near Busingiro, Budongo FR, a 'mystery canopy call' was tape-recorded (JL, JR) and a pair of Ituri Batises responded to playback by calling agitatedly and descending to the mid-storey. Based on its distinctive vocalisation, the species is fairly common in broken forest around Busingiro (at least four pairs/singles on 3 May), although only one pair was encountered in two days in taller, closed-canopy forest along the 'Royal Mile', Budongo FR. Another individual was heard and tape-recorded in secondary forest, Semliki NP on 29 May. This species, a recent addition to the East African avifauna (Ash *et al.* 1991a), is considered rare (Urban *et al.* 1997) but may be found to be more common now that its vocalisations are known.

Pink-footed Puffback *Dryoscopus angolensis* Two on each of 10 and 11 March in Mabira FR, and fairly common (2–6 daily) at both higher and medium altitudes in Bwindi Impenetrable NP. Considered uncommon and local in SW Uganda (Britton 1980).

Purple-throated Cuckoo-shrike *Campephaga quiscalina* A pair on 10 March (JR, SR, MS) and a male on 11 March in Mabira FR, and a male in Mount Elgon NP on 24 May. Considered uncommon and local (Britton 1980).

Black-winged Oriole *Oriolus nigripennis*. Only seen once (17 April) in Semliki NP, its only East African locality, where it is an "apparently rare resident" (Britton 1980).

Sharpe's Starling *Cinnyricinclus sharpii* A flock of 5 birds in Kibale NP on 26 April (JR, SR, MW) represents the first park record. In south-western Uganda, this highland forest species is restricted to Bwindi Impenetrable NP and the Rwenzori range (Britton 1980) but is known to wander in response to fruiting of trees (Zimmerman *et al.* 1996).

Little Purple-banded Sunbird *Nectarinia bifasciata* Several, including immatures, in riparian forest on the south bank of the Victoria Nile opposite Murchison Falls on 4 and 5 May. Only known from "scattered records" in western Uganda (Britton 1980).

Rufous Sparrow *Passer rufocinctus* Two pairs in Murchison Falls NP on 6 and 7 May represent a westward extension of this widespread species' range. Previously known in Uganda from scattered localities in the north-east (Britton 1980).

Fox's Weaver *Ploceus spekeoides* Four on the northern bank of Lake Opeta (1°39' N, 34°10' E) on 26 May. A Ugandan endemic with a very restricted range (Britton 1980).

Yellow-crowned Bishop *Euplectes afer* A male in breeding plumage on the Semliki Flats (1°00' N, 30°30' E) on 25 April. Considered scarce and local (Britton 1980).

Southern Red Bishop *Euplectes orix* Extends north to at least 0°50' N, 30°15' E in Semliki WR, where common and sympatric with the equally numerous Northern Red Bishop *E. franciscanus*. These two species are usually considered allopatric (Britton 1980).

Red-fronted Antpecker *Parmoptila woodhousei* A pair on 4 April (MG) and a pair, probably the same birds, on 5 April (JR) in Bwindi Impenetrable NP, a pair on 22 April and a single on 31 May in Semliki NP. An uncommon resident, known elsewhere in Uganda only from Budongo, Kibale and Kalinzu forests (Britton 1980).

Grey-headed Olive-back *Nesocharis capistrata* One on 2 May (JL, JR) and a pair on 13 May (JR) near Busingiro, Budongo FR. An uncommon and local resident (Britton 1980).

Shelley's Crimsonwing *Cryptospiza shelleyi* A pair at 2525 m in Bwindi Impenetrable NP on 20 March. An uncommon resident, known elsewhere in Uganda from the Rwenzoris (Britton 1980).

Dusky Twinspot *Euschistospiza cinereovinacea* One at 2250 m at the edge of Bwindi Impenetrable NP on 25 March (JR, SR). This scarce resident is known elsewhere in Uganda from Lake Chahafi (Britton 1980).

Magpie Mannikin *Lonchura fringilloides* Two outside the borders of the park near Buhoma, Bwindi Impenetrable NP on 1 April (JR) and two in Semliki NP on 21 April (JR). This scarce and local species is known from previous records in the Semliki NP but is not known from within Bwindi Impenetrable NP (Britton 1980).

Straw-tailed Whydah *Vidua fischeri* A transitional plumaged male in Kidepo Valley NP on 21 May confirms the previous record(s) for the park.

References

- Ash, J.S. 1985. Birds, including a hybrid, new to Uganda. *Scopus* 9: 133–137.
- Ash, J.S., Dowsett, R. J. & Dowsett-Lemaire, F. 1991a. Additions to the East African avifauna. *Scopus* 14: 73–75.
- Ash, J.S., Coverdale, M.A.C. & Gullick, T.M. 1991b. Comments on status and distribution of birds in western Uganda. *Scopus* 15: 24–29.
- Britton, P.L. (ed.) 1980. *Birds of East Africa: their habitat, status and distribution*. Nairobi: East Africa Natural History Society.

- Collar, N.J. & Stuart, S.N. 1988. *Key forests for threatened birds of Africa and related islands*. Cambridge, UK: International Council for Bird Preservation.
- Dranzoa, C. & Rodrigues, R. 1990. Two new records for Uganda. *Scopus* 14: 32–33.
- Friedmann, H. & Williams, J.G. 1970. The birds of the Kalinzu Forest, southwestern Ankole, Uganda. *Los Angeles County Museum Contributions to Science* 195: 1–27.
- Friedmann, H. & Williams, J.G. 1971. The birds of the lowlands of Bwamba, Toro Province, Uganda. *Los Angeles County Museum Contributions to Science* 211: 1–70.
- Fry, C.H., Keith, S. & Urban, E.K. 1988. *The birds of Africa*. Vol. 3. London: Academic Press.
- Howard, P.C. & Davenport, T.R.B. (eds) 1996. *Forest biodiversity reports*. Vols 1–33. Kampala: Uganda Forest Department.
- Keith, S., Urban, E.K. & Fry, C.H. 1992. *The birds of Africa*. Vol. 4. London: Academic Press.
- Pearson, D.J. & Turner, D.A. 1986. The less common Palaearctic migrant birds of Uganda. *Scopus* 10: 61–82.
- Plumptre, A.J. & Owionji, I. 1997. Puvel's Illadopsis *Illadopsis puveli* in Budongo Forest: a new record for Uganda. *Scopus* 19: 114–116.
- Rossouw, J. & Lindsell, J. 2001. Black-throated Coucal *Centropus leucogaster*: a first record for East Africa. *Scopus* 22: 63–65.
- Rossouw, J. & Sacchi, M. 1998. *Where to watch birds in Uganda*. Kampala: Uganda Tourist Board.
- Urban, E.K., Fry, C.H. & Keith, S. 1997. *The birds of Africa*. Vol. 5. London: Academic Press.
- Van Someren, V.G.L. 1918. Further contribution to the ornithology of Uganda, West Elgon. *Novitates Zoologicae* 25.
- Wilson, S.E. (ed.) 1995. *Bird and mammal checklists for Uganda's National Parks*. Kampala: National Biodiversity Data Bank.
- Zimmerman, D.A., Turner, D.A. & Pearson, D.J. 1996. *Birds of Kenya and Northern Tanzania*. Halfway House, SA: Russell Friedman.

J.D. Rossouw

104 Kensington Drive, Durban North, 4051, South Africa, e: jonshez@iafrica.com